1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

167 The steady decrease in the population culminated in 1871 when most of the natives left for Tahiti and Mangareva. The exact number of those who abandoned their homes that year is difficult to ascertain. Jaussen (113, p. 385) says that 231 Easter Islanders were working on Brander's plantations and that 50 (some other sources say about 100) stayed in Mangareva with the missionaries. By 1873, 100 of the 231 had died. The number of the emigrants to Tahiti estimated by Thomson (215, p. 461) and Geiseler (87, p. 19) as 400 or 500 is certainly exaggerated, since they say that 300 or 400 were also transferred to Mangareva. In 1900 the Easter Islanders in Tahiti were only 44—21 men, 11 women, and 13 children (7, p. 84). I do not know the present number.

161 The following table tabulates all available population figures for the period 1872 to 1934. This includes inaccurate estimates made by missionaries and visitors as well as careful censuses.

161 The present population is concentrated in the village of Hanga-roa and occupies 2,000 hectares. This area, granted to the natives by the government, is small but sufficient for their needs. Only the fields in and around Hanga-roa are cultivated but the need of more land has never been felt. It might even be said that the natives could produce far beyond their wants if they cared to. If 456 natives can live easily on a small portion of the island which is not particularly fertile it may be assumed that eight or nine times that number could have made a comfortable living on the entire island. Formerly fishing was a more important food resource than it is now. I believe that the population of Easter Island a hundred years ago must have been between 3,000 and 4,000. Meyer and Jablonowski (160, p. 6), who have investigated carefully the population of Easter Island, propose the same figure. If the population was about 3,000 before the coming of the white men it gives a density of 13.7 persons to one square kilometer, about the same number as that for Tahiti.

164 Leprosy is the only disease endemic to the island. In 1934 there were 22 lepers confined in a separate hut. During the five months we spent on the island all the other natives were examined by Dr. Drapkin who found them in excellent health, with the exception of a few cases of tuberculosis. Venereal diseases are rare and only three or four cases of blennorrhea have been reported. Natives are very susceptible to pulmonary infection. The visit of any boat is invariably followed by an epidemic of influenza or bronchitis. Although surgeons of a warship inspect the island at intervals the natives were vaccinated for the first time during our stay on the island.

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